

WASHINGTON. D.C. – House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Ranking Member Darrell Issa (R-CA) joined today with House Republican Leader John Boehner (R-OH) and Education & Labor Committee Chairman Howard P. “Buck” McKeon (R-CA) in introducing legislation to reauthorize the District of Columbia’s groundbreaking school choice program. Since 2004, this program has provided unprecedented educational opportunities for thousands of inner-city students who are poorly served by the D.C. public schools system.

“To the thousands of low-income students who are trapped in dead-end DC schools, the ‘Yes We Can’ president has defiantly said, ‘No You Can’t.’ The reasons to continue funding the DC Opportunity Scholarship Program are convincing. It’s working for students and it’s wanted by parents,” Issa said. “This program should be judged on its merits, not political agendas. The President’s politically-motivated aversion to successful programs launched during the previous administration and his willingness to deliver a political victory to powerful unions and liberal interest groups is no reason to jeopardize the future of already disadvantaged D.C. schoolchildren.”

Last month, an independent [report](#), sponsored by the Department of Education, evaluating the program’s success found that students who participated in the program performed at “statistically higher levels in reading equivalent to 3.1 months of additional learning.”

“This report highlights the value of continuing to invest in providing expanded education opportunities to students who come from low-income families,” Issa said. “Choice of schools shouldn’t be limited to those who are fortunate enough to come from an affluent family – every child deserves the chance to unlock their limitless potential and this voucher program is central to that effort.”

The program was authorized by Congress in 2004 to provide low-income residents, particularly those whose children attend failing public schools, with “expanded opportunities to attend higher performing schools in the District of Columbia.” The scholarship, worth up to \$7,500, could be used to cover the costs of tuition, school fees, and transportation to a participating private school. Ninety-nine percent of scholarship recipients are black or Hispanic, and there are more than four applicants for each scholarship.

President Obama last month slashed funding for the program; though later he offered a compromise to allow existing scholarship recipients time to finish an education at their current school of choice.

[Click here to read the legislation.](#)